Toba Batak language

Toba Batak /ˈtoʊbə ˈbætək/[3] is an Austronesian language spoken in North Sumatra province in Indonesia. It is part of a group of languages called "Batak".

There are approximately 2,000,000 Toba Batak speakers, living to the east, west and south of Lake Toba. Historically it was written using Batak script, but the Latin script is now used for most writing.

Contents

Toba Batak	
Hata Batak Toba	
Batak written in *Surat Batak* (Batak script)	
Native to	Indonesia
Region	Samosir Island (2° 30′ N, 99°), and to the east, south, and west of Toba Lake in north Sumatra.
Native speakers	(2 million cited 1991)[1]

Language family	Austronesian
	• Malayo-Polynesian
	  • Northwest Sumatra–Barrier Islands
	   • Batak
	    • Southern
	     • **Toba Batak**

Writing system	Latin, Batak alphabet
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	bbc
Glottolog	bata1289 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/bata1289)[2]

Nomenclature

The name of this language arises from a rich and complex history of ethnic identity in colonial and post-colonial Indonesia. It is a generic name for the common language used by the people of the districts of Toba, Uluan, Humbang, Habinsaran, Samosir, and Silindung, centered upon the Island of Sumatra; more particularly, at Lake Toba. Linguistically and culturally these tribes of people are closely related. Other nearby communities such as Silalahi and Tongging may also be classified as speakers of Toba Batak.

The term "Toba Batak" is, itself, a derivation of the Toba Batak language. As such, it is used both as a noun and an adjective; both to describe a language, and also to describe the people who speak the language.

Among the aforementioned districts, Toba is the most densely populated and politically the most prominent district so that "Toba Batak" became a label for all communities speaking a dialect closely akin to the dialect spoken in Toba. In contemporary Indonesia the language is seldom referred to as "Toba Batak" (bahasa Batak Toba), but more commonly and simply as "Batak" (bahasa Batak). The (Toba)-Batak refer to it in their own language as "Hata Batak". This "Batak" language is different from the languages of other "Batak"

people that can be divided in speaking a northern Batak dialect (Karo Batak, and Pakpak-Dairi Batak – linguistically this dialect group also includes the culturally very different Alas people), a central Batak dialect (Simalungun) and closely related other southern Batak dialects such as Angkola and Mandailing.

Background

There are several dictionaries and grammars for each of the five major dialects of Batak (Angkola-Mandailing, Toba, Simalungun, Pakpak-Dairi, and Karo). Specifically for Toba Batak the most important dictionaries are that of Johannes Warneck (Toba-German) and Herman Neubronner van der Tuuk (Toba-Dutch). The latter was also involved in translating the Christian Bible into Toba Batak.

Phonology

This description follows Nababan (1981).[4]

Consonants

The distribution of Batak languages in northern Sumatra. Toba Batak is the majority language in the blue-colored areas labeled with its ISO 639-3 code "bbc".

Play media
A Toba Batak speaker.

Manuscript in Toba Batak language, central Sumatra, early 1800s.

Toba Batak houses and residents in a photograph by Christiaan Benjamin Nieuwenhuis.

		Labial	Dental/Alveolar	(Alveolo-)palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	voiceless	p	t		k	
	voiced	b	d		g	
Affricate	voiceless			t͡ɕ		
	voiced			d͡ʑ		
Fricative			s			h
Nasal		m	n		ŋ	
Trill			r			
Approximant		w	l	j		

Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Close-mid	e	(ə)	o
Open-mid	ɛ		ɔ
Open		a	

/ə/ only occurs in loanwords from Indonesian.

Stress

Stress is phonemic, e.g. /'tibbo/ 'height' vs. /tib'bo/ 'high'; /'itɔm/ 'black dye' vs. /i'tɔm/ 'your sibling'.

Syntax

Toba Batak has verb-initial, VOS word order, as with many Austronesian languages. In (1), the verb *mangallang* 'eat' precedes the object *kue* 'cake', and the verb phrase precedes *dakdanak i* 'the child'.

(1) Mangallang kue dakdanak i.

AT-eat   cake   child   the
'The child is eating a cake.' (Silitonga 1973:3)

<u>SVO word order</u> (as in English), however, is also very common (Cole & Hermon 2008). In (2), the subject *dakdanakon* 'this child' precedes the verb phrase *mangatuk biangi* 'hit the dog'.

(2) Dakdanak-on   mang-atuk   biang-i.
     child-this   ACT-hit   dog-DEF
     'This child hit the dog.' (Cole & Hermon 2008)
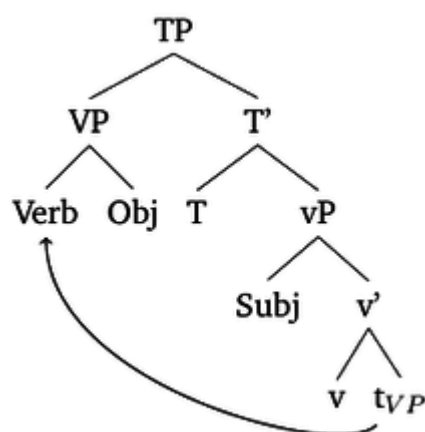

Figure 1: VP movement to derive VOS word order.

Cole & Hermon (2008) claim that VOS order is the result of <u>VP-raising</u> (specifically, of VoiceP) (Figure 1). Then, the subject may optionally raise over the verb phrase due because of information structure. This analysis provides a basis for understanding Austronesian languages that have more fully become SVO (e.g. Indonesian: Chung 2008; Jarai: Jensen 2014).

Like many Austronesian languages (e.g. <u>Tagalog</u>), DP *wh*-movement is subject to an extraction restriction (e.g. Rackowski & Richards 2005). The verb in (3a) must agree with *aha* 'what' (in (3a): TT or "theme-topic") for it to be extracted in front of the verb. If the verb agrees with the subject, *si John* 'John' (in (3b): AT or "actor-topic"), *aha* 'what' may not extract.

(3a) Aha   diida   si   John?
      what   TT.see   PM   John
      'What did John see?' (Cole & Hermon 2008)

(3b) *Aha   mangida   si   John?
     what   AT.see   PM   John
     Intended: 'What did John see?' (Schachter 1984:126)

Notes

1. <u>Toba Batak (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/bbc/)</u> at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). <u>"Batak Toba" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/bata1289)</u>. *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Bauer, Laurie (2007). *The Linguistics Student's Handbook*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
4. Nababan, P. W. J. (1981). *A Grammar of Toba-Batak*. Pacific Linguistics: Series D, 37: Canberra: Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University.

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External links

- OLAC resources in and about the Batak Toba language (http://www.language-archives.org/language/bbc)
- Reference to contemporary Batak Bible (http://www.worldscriptures.org/pages/bataktoba.html)
- Example translation of Biblical Scripture (http://www.language-museum.com/encyclopedia/b/batak-toba.php) (published by the Language Museum (http://www.language-museum.com/encyclopedia/), a site published by Zhang Hong, an internet consultant and amateur linguist in Beijing China)
- Sejara Indonesia (http://www.gimonca.com/sejarah/sejarah01.shtml) An Online Outline of Indonesia History.